

Kandahar victims recover at Bagram

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Keith Thompson
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – On Jan. 6 a series of explosions ripped through the east side of the city of Kandahar, and 11 days later the effects of those explosions are still evident on the children now in the 452nd Combat Support Hospital here.

As many as 14 people were killed and dozens were wounded in the double bomb blast in the “spiritual home of the Taliban” just one day after Afghanistan adopted a new constitution, according to a statement from the office of Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai.

The victims were mainly children from the nearby Abdul Ahad Karzai primary school, named after the president’s father who was assassinated by Taliban agents five years ago, and many were transferred to medical facilities at Kandahar Air Field while others were evacuated to Bagram.

“We received 11 victims total – all of them being children,” said Capt. Mary Jo



Gul Mohmed, oblivious to the bustle of Army doctors and nurses around him, is one of the injured children from Kandahar recovering in the 452nd Combat Support Hospital Intensive Care Ward.

Literski, a nurse with the 452nd CSH out of Milwaukee, Wis. “For our facility that’s a large number of casualties all at once.”

According to Literski, most of the injuries were shrapnel wounds from the explosion, many of them requiring surgery.

“The shrapnel only makes a small puncture mark when it goes in, but then it does a lot of damage on the inside so most of them needed abdominal surgery to get the shrap-

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Troop rotations to provide right mix of forces

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample
American Force Press Service

WASHINGTON – Possibly the largest rotation of military forces in United States history is about to take place, as thousands of troops prepare to relieve units that have been in Iraq and Afghanistan for as long as a year, the director of operations for the Joint Staff said here Friday.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Norton Schwartz said the rotation will involve all varieties of active duty and reserve combat and support forces.

He said the goal of the rotation will be to satisfy the needs of ground commanders for the right kinds of forces – especially civil affairs, military police and intelligence units.

“Clearly, before May 1, (2003), when we were still involved in major combat operations, you had forces configured for that purpose,” he said. “As we have moved into a stability and support operations phase – that is, to provide a secure and stable environment from which the promise of the Iraqi people can actually be manifested – what we’ve done is sort of optimized the forces for that mission.”

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Howard Dean and his wife, Judy, arrive Sunday in Davenport, Iowa.

Democrats blitz Iowa on eve

DES MOINES, Iowa – Months of campaigning and weeks of ‘round-the-clock efforts in Iowa all came down to a final push, as four Democrats fought for any edge that might make one of them the victor in Monday’s caucuses.

Sens. John Kerry and John Edwards, Rep. Dick Gephardt and former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean – neck-and-neck for the presidential nomination in state polls – reached out to voters in all corners of the Midwestern state, each portraying himself as the one to reverse President Bush’s foreign policy and economic program.

With many Iowans saying they’re still undecided and the state’s unique voting system, any of the four candidates could emerge the victor.

No survivors found in Lake Erie commuter plane crash

(CNN) – Canadian authorities called off efforts Sunday to find survivors of a commuter plane that crashed into the icy waters of Lake Erie, leaving 10 people presumed dead, eight of whom were men returning from a hunting trip.

The single-engine Cessna 208 Caravan was carrying the hunters back to Windsor, Ontario, from a trip to Pelee Island, about 20 miles north of Sandusky, Ohio, when it crashed about 4:40 p.m. Saturday. Don Enns, a senior investigator for the Transportation

Safety Board of Canada, said a Canadian team would investigate the cause of the crash.

The victims included the hunters, all of whom were from towns in Ontario, the plane’s pilot and a woman from Los Angeles, identified as a friend of the pilot. Authorities called off the search for survivors about 1 p.m. Sunday, an Ontario provincial police spokesman said.

“No survivors were found at the site, and it is now believed that all 10 people on board the plane are deceased,” the agency said in a statement Sunday afternoon.



U.S. soldiers secure the scene of Sunday’s car bomb.

Suicide bombing kills 23 near coalition safe zone, checkpoint

BAGHDAD, Iraq – A suicide bombing outside the compound of the U.S.-led occupation authority in Baghdad killed at least 23 people, most of them Iraqi civilians trapped in their cars as they were waiting to pass through security checks.

The blast shook buildings miles away from the Green Zone, the heavily fortified area that is home to the Coalition Provisional Authority. More than 60 were wounded.

The truck was laden with about 1,000 pounds of military-grade explosives, a military official said.

A security source told CNN the bomber may have carried eight unsuspecting Iraqis in the back of the vehicle to disguise his intentions, but a military source in Baghdad, citing witness accounts from soldiers, said no day laborers were on the vehicle.

The bombing took place as many Iraqis lined up at security checkpoints near the gate to start their workday or apply for a job at the coalition headquarters.

Traffic packed a main intersection outside the entrance at the time of the blast, and many of the Iraqis killed were in their vehicles waiting to pass through a checkpoint, a U.S. military spokesman said.



Zavos said he had delivered what he had promised.

Human cloning proof demanded

LONDON – Scientists have received the news that a human embryo has been cloned into a woman with a large dose of skepticism and are challenging the maverick fertility expert to prove it.

U.S.-based Dr. Panos Zavos said on Sunday some secrecy had to be maintained in his work and he stood by his announcement that he had transplanted the embryo into a 35-year-old woman less than two weeks ago.

The claim bore a striking resemblance to an announcement made last year by the Raelian Movement – a cult that believes life on Earth was engineered by visitors from outer space – saying it had produced the world’s first cloned human.

It never came up with any scientific evidence but managed to whip up huge publicity around the world.

Scientists are now throwing down a similar gauntlet to Zavos, urging him to publish his results so they can be reviewed by experts.

“Like most scientists and doctors I remain extremely skeptical of the claims,” said Bob Ward from the Royal Society, Britain’s main academy of science.

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nel out and repair the damage to the internal organs,” Leterski said.

She said that without the medical care provided at the U.S. hospital “probably a lot of them would have died.

“(In Afghanistan) there is a medical system, but it’s very limited,” Leterski said. “Their surgical capabilities are almost not available.”

Although the CSH gets casualties from Kandahar often, the large number of children has prompted visits from media and service members concerned with the children’s welfare, Leterski said.

She said several service members have come to the hospital to visit the children and bring them gifts “trying to help them in a small way get over the trauma by doing something positive for them.

“The kids in general are very gracious of the care that we give them,” Leterski said. “Initially they seem frightened because they don’t understand the language and they don’t understand what we’re doing.

“After sometimes hours and sometimes days you can see the difference in the children in how they react to you – how they trust you,” she said. And the children are not the only ones who benefit from the services provided by coalition forces, since the

healthcare providers get a lot of satisfaction from helping patch up the victims of a country in turmoil, Leterski said.

“It makes you feel great,” she said. “We talk about it amongst ourselves all the time. We’re amazed at how the children bounce back.”

Karzai condemned the attack as an “act of cruelty and barbarism,” and said it would only strengthen his resolve to fight terrorism in Afghanistan.

In conjunction with the fight against terrorists, it’s the skilled medical personnel called upon daily to mend Afghanistan’s youth that will strengthen a new generation’s resolve to fight for peace.

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Schwartz said units heading for the theater will be “a little less heavy” than they were before the war, and “a little more mobile, more ‘infantry-centric.’”

Meanwhile, Schwartz said, a few units will have to remain in the theater a bit longer before returning home. He said the Defense Department recently approved the extension of selected Army units past their 12-month rotation period.

Schwartz said the extension probably will be no longer than 60 days, and that the number of troops affected would be a relatively small. He said about 1,600 troops from 12 units would have to be extended past the one-year mark.

“That’s 12 units out of 1,250,” Schwartz explained. “That’s a relatively small percentage, but that’s not insignificant to the individual troops that are obviously involved in this.”

Schwartz said the Pentagon did everything possible to avoid having units going beyond a 12-month deployment, from shortening the training time for successor units to reducing reception staging and onward movement and integration.

“We even tried to leave equipment in theater, which would also reduce transit time for equipment on aircraft,” he said.

Mission was another reason for the

delay of some troops returning home. Certain missions simply could not allow for gaps.

“We came to the conclusion reluctantly, but appropriately, that we had to ask just a touch more from our people,” Schwartz said, adding gratitude for the affected service members’ work and for their understanding that a significant effort was made to avoid extending their deployment.

Troops about to relieve their comrades have a clear mission to “complete the deal,” Schwartz said. “And so they’re going with the same sense of commitment and recognition – that this is to deliver on the promise that the president has articulated,” he added.

The general said young soldiers deploying for the first time understand that this is what service is: both routine and challenging. “And clearly this is a more challenging period,” he said. “And all of us get tested during periods like this; that is something to look

forward to. What young soldiers should know is that they are going to serve a very important cause, they are going to be well-led, and that their work is worthy.”

Schwartz said thus far the increasing number of Iraqi security forces being trained by the United States has not affected the rotation of troops to Iraq. But he added that “over time, and not a very long time, the Iraqi forces will be assuming more and more of the obligation associated with the stability mission.”



DoD photo by Grazyna Musick

Applause is given to the 270 soldiers returning home from Operation Iraqi Freedom during a welcome home ceremony at Abrams Field House on Fort Hood, Texas. The soldiers, from various units of Forts Hood, Bliss, Benning and Carson are being redeployed to their home duty stations.

Rebuilding a nation

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Chuck Lawhead
Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan

CHARIKAR, Afghanistan — It was once a war torn country, having been occupied by the Russians and then the Taliban, but today, Afghanistan is a new country.

With a new government in place, the Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) coming to an end, and a growing national army, the Afghans are a happier people seeing a new hope for tomorrow.

With the new hope comes the rebuilding of a nation. On Dec. 15, the sixth National Army Volunteer Center (NAVC) saw its grand opening commenced by a ribbon cutting ceremony, officiated by the governor of the Parwan Province, Zara Ahmad, along with other members of the Afghan government, Afghan National Army (ANA) and U.S. military officials. Lt. Col. David Francavilla, chief of the recruiting assistance team, Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan (OMC-A), said, "I anticipate having 33 NAVCs up and operating by April, 2004. There are already six operating with high success rates."

"The ANA is looking for three things in a new recruit: One, he must be between the ages of 18 and 28; two, he should be of good heart and health; three, the recruit is to be an Afghan citizen," he said

The focus of OMC-A is to help outfit and train the Afghan National Army. The NAVC in Charikar is one example of how ready the people of Afghanistan are to see a strong, proud nation. OMC-A, citizens and leaders are working very well together to meet this goal. It took only two months to get this center up and running. Afghanistan is truly a nation rebuilding.



The sixth National Army Volunteer Center was officially opened during a ceremony Dec. 15.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

"Conspiracy Theory"

0830Z at the MWR building:

Jerry Fletcher is a man who sees conspiracies everywhere. But if you keep doing that long enough, sooner or later you're going to get one right.

1530Z: Latino Dance Night

Tomorrow's movie:

"Little Nicky"



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Tuesday
Uzbekistan:	Cloudy/Rain H: 61F L: 31F	Cloudy/Rain H: 46F L: 36F
Bagram:	Fog/Cloudy H: 54F L: 27F	Fog/Cloudy H: 50F L: 28F
Kabul:	Fog/Cloudy H: 52F L: 25F	Fog/Cloudy H: 48F L: 27F
Kandahar:	Mostly Cloudy H: 55F L: 34F	Cloudy/Rain H: 54F L: 30F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *SI.com*)

Panthers shut down McNabb, Eagles

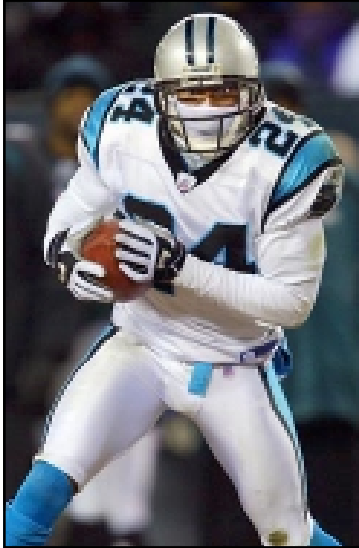
PHILADELPHIA—Sorry, Eagles. Not this time, either. The surprising Carolina Panthers are Super Bowl-bound instead.

The Panthers once again showed no fear on the road, shocking Philadelphia 14-3 Sunday night and handing the Eagles their third straight NFC championship game defeat.

Rookie Ricky Manning Jr., a hero last week with an interception to set up the winning touchdown at St. Louis, picked off three passes against an ailing Donovan McNabb.

Eight days after ending the Rams' 14-game home winning streak in double overtime, the Panthers marched into The Linc and grabbed their first conference crown. They'd gotten this far in 1996, their second season, but lost to Green Bay.

This time, they extended the angst-filled wait for a championship in Philadelphia and will head to Houston to meet the New England Patriots on Feb. 1.



Ricky Manning, who had three interceptions in the regular season, has four key picks in the playoffs.



Ty Law was the star of the game, intercepting three Peyton Manning passes.

Patriots to return to the Super Bowl

FOXBORO, Mass.—The New England Patriots didn't need snow to ruin Peyton Manning's perfect postseason. Their defense did it all.

Ty Law had three interceptions, Rodney Harrison added another and forced a fumble, and the Patriots beat the Colts 24-14 to advance to their second Super Bowl in three seasons.

Jarvis Green had three of the team's four sacks as the constant pressure made the NFL's co-MVP look very average.

Manning had thrown eight touchdowns and no interceptions, and the Colts had scored 79 points in wins over Denver and Kansas City.

But Indianapolis could never get going on Sunday. Things were so bad that when the Colts finally had to punt for the first time in the playoffs, the snap went over the punter's head and resulted in a safety.

"They did a good job defending us but we did things we haven't done. We turned the ball over, we snapped a poor snap on the punt," Colts coach Tony Dungy said. "We made some miscues and New England is a good enough team to take advantage of that."

Spurs end three-game losing streak

BOSTON—The NBA champion San Antonio Spurs rediscovered a familiar formula and ended their three-game losing streak.

With a strong defensive effort backed by Rasho Nesterovic's season-high 23 points and 13 rebounds, the Spurs beat the Boston Celtics 109-92 Sunday.

"We combined 48 minutes of good defense with making some shots," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "That certainly makes things easy for us."

Tony Parker scored 20 points—all by halftime—and Tim Duncan added 15 points and seven rebounds for the Spurs.

"Call in the search party, because we've found him tonight," Popovich said, referring to Parker. "Without him, we've got problems. He's very important to us. It was nice to see him be aggressive and make some shots."

Celtics coach Jim O'Brien wasn't nearly as pleased, of course, after his team's fourth loss in a row.

Boston was outrebounded 50-34 and outscored in the paint 54-34.



Tim Duncan had a quiet night but held together the Spurs' defense.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Seven al Qaeda suspects held in raid

By Sheikh Sabir

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) – Pakistani agents seized seven suspected al Qaeda militants and a weapons cache in a pre-dawn raid on an apartment complex in Karachi on Sunday, a day after Pakistan vowed to renew its fight against terrorism.

Police found five hand grenades, four handguns, ammunition and maps of Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan, an intelligence officer told *The Associated Press* on condition of anonymity.

There was no immediate word on whether the arrested suspects were engaged in an active plot. They included two Egyptian and three Afghan men and two Arab women, the officer said. Police did not identify them or say what rank they allegedly held in Osama bin Laden's terror organization.

"Our information is that these are al Qaeda people," Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said. "One is a recognized man."

Neighbors said about 50 to 60 armed officers surrounded the Cassim Complex, a block of 160 apartments in the middle-class Gulistan-e-Jauhar neighborhood where the suspects had lived for two months.

Police moved in at 3 a.m., broke down the door of a fourth floor apartment and brought out the suspects about a half-hour later, residents said. There was no gunfire.

Residents also said police also took away three children: an infant carried by one of the women, and two boys ages 4 and 5.

The arrests in this teeming port city of 14 million people came one day after Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf vowed to crush terrorism in his first-ever speech to Parliament.

Musharraf, a key U.S. ally, also held talks Friday on fighting terrorism with U.S. Gen. John Abizaid, head of the American military campaign in Afghanistan.

Sunday's detentions coincide with stepped-up military operations to hunt al Qaeda fugitives in Pakistan's semiautonomous tribal areas along the rugged border with Afghanistan, a possible hiding place for bin Laden and his chief lieutenant, Ayman al-Zawahri.

Afghanistan opens foreign bank

KABUL, Afghanistan (AFP) – Over the next few weeks Afghanistan's banking sector will move from comprising just six rundown specialist banks to one where several international commercial operations compete for business – with perhaps even an ATM machine around the corner.

The National Bank of Pakistan is the only foreign bank operating in the country, but competition is building with First Micro Finance Bank, majority-owned by the Agha Khan Fund for Economic Development, and British-based Standard Chartered preparing to open soon.

The Afghanistan International Bank (AIB), a local bank with international shareholders and ING management, and Pakistan's Habib Bank are also set to open their doors in the capital once they receive licenses, all but a technicality, according to Afghanistan's central bank governor, Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady.

Of the existing six banks in the country, the Pashtuni Tejaraty Bank and the Milli-e Bank (National Bank) will be restructured.

The remaining four – the Agricultural Bank, Industrial Bank, Mortgage Bank and Export Promotion Bank – will be merged or liquidated, Ahady said.

The government has also had "at least two more applications" for banking licenses and a number of other banks in Pakistan and Iran have expressed interest, Ahady said.

"In the past, that section of the market economy was heavily controlled by the state, we are abandoning that," Ahady told *AFP*.

"We will move to a more market economy type of economy, which means competition and that competition is open to Afghans and to internationals."

Ahady said he hoped the foreign banks, each of which must guarantee capital of five million U.S. dollars to gain a license, would become more important than the public system and develop the market for credit in the country, until now an unknown quantity.

"The demand that is really a legitimate demand, I don't know what the size of that is and I hope these banks will develop it."

Ahady would like to see 10 banks operating in Afghanistan, with the option of handing out more licenses if demand is strong enough.



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support